

# Ansible



## Ansible 314 September 2013

From David Langford, 94 London Road, Reading, Berks, RG1 5AU, UK. Web news.ansible.co.uk. ISSN 0265-9816 (print); 1740-942X (e). Logo: Dan Steffan. Cartoon: Brad W. Foster. Available for SAE or Get Out Of The Dung Pits Of Glyve pass.

**LoneStarCon 3.** Hugo Awards: NOVEL John Scalzi, *Redshirts*. NOVELLA Brandon Sanderson, *The Emperor's Soul*. NOVELETTE Pat Cadigan, 'The Girl-Thing Who Went Out for Sushi' (*Edge of Infinity*). SHORT Ken Liu, 'Mono no Aware' (*The Future is Japanese*). RELATED WORK Brandon Sanderson, Dan Wells, Mary Robinette Kowal, Howard Tayler & Jordan Sanderson, *Writing Excuses, Season Seven*. GRAPHIC STORY Brian K. Vaughan & Fiona Staples, *Saga, Volume One*. DRAMATIC—LONG *The Avengers*. DRAMATIC—SHORT *Game of Thrones: 'Blackwater'*. EDITOR—SHORT Stanley Schmidt. EDITOR—LONG Patrick Nielsen Hayden. PRO ARTIST John Picacio. SEMIPROZINE *Clarkesworld*. FANZINE *SF Signal*. FANCAST *SF Squeecast*. FAN WRITER Tansy Rayner Roberts. FAN ARTIST Galen Dara. JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD Mur Lafferty. • Proposals to remove the fan writer, fan artist and fanzine Hugos, to add a new Hugo for very short (<15min) dramatic presentations, and (again) to create a YA 'Best Youth Book' category, were all rejected at the first business meeting. • *Spokane in 2015*: when the Orlando bid was eliminated and votes reassigned, Spokane's 645 votes beat Helsinki's 610. [KS] • *Dublin in 2019?* This new Worldcon bid, announced at LoneStarCon, plans to use the CCD (Convention Centre Dublin), 14-19 August 2019.

### Upon this Bank and Shoal

**Margaret Atwood** seemed to be backing away from her 'SF is All Talking Squid in Outer Space' position: 'SF is a form that allows an exploration of social structures in a more indirect and possibly more entertaining manner than does social realism.' (*Guardian Book Club*, 9 August) [DL] But her new book, despite the bioterrorism and massive human genetic engineering, is a far cry from mere science fiction: 'If I were writing about Planet Xenor, that would be different. It is our world, except with a few twists.' (*Guardian*, 24 August) [JC]

**Neil Blomkamp** feels much the same. His film *Elysium* may show all the world's rich people living in space-station luxury while the Earth of 2154 is a poor folks' dystopia, but he says firmly: 'It's not science fiction. This is now.' (BBC, 12 August) [MPJ] Well, *metaphorically*....

**Peter Capaldi**, the subject of a recent announcement (see 'As Others ...' below), was credited in *World War Z* as 'W.H.O. Doctor'. [MPJ and many others] This proves it! (Copyright © Astral Leauge 1977 donot impinge copyright or the Leauge will TAKE MEASURES.)

**Susan Cooper** and **Tanith Lee** are to receive this year's World Fantasy Awards for lifetime achievement. Very deserving choices.

**Stieg Larsson**, of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* fame, wrote heaps of still-unpublished sf stories when in his teens; his 'Brain Power' is to appear in a 2014 US anthology of Swedish material. Traditional disclaimer follows: "I wouldn't call it science fiction. It's really a suspense story set in the future," says publisher Otto Penzler. (*Guardian*, 8 August, in Kindle edition but not on website) [JS]

**Steven Moffat** featured in an *Independent* 'Edinburgh Diary' snippet headlined 'The Time Lord's creator ...' To show that wasn't a one-off slip, they call him 'Dr Who creator' in the text. Who knew that this strangely ageless fellow was on the scene in 1963? (17 August)

**Lucius Shepard**, while hospitalized in August, had a stroke and is in rehab, working on speech and reading difficulties. Get Well cards c/o Bob Urell, 3700 SE Stiles Rd, Washougal, WA 98671, USA. [ED/PDF]

### Concentration

7 Sep • **TitanCon** (sf & *Game of Thrones*), Wellington Park Hotel, Belfast. £25 reg; £5 supp. Join online at [www.titancon.com](http://www.titancon.com) (PayPal only, with £1.20 surcharge on full membership).

10 Sep • **SF Film Night** (*The Day the Earth Caught Fire* plus panel discussion), Bloomsbury Theatre, London. 7pm for 7:45; £5 + £2.50 booking fee (!) at [www.thebloomsbury.com/event/run/1834](http://www.thebloomsbury.com/event/run/1834). Part of the European Planetary Science Congress 'Festival of the Planets'.

13-15 Sep • **The Asylum** (steampunk), Lincoln. Various prices. Online booking only: see [steampunk.synthasite.com](http://steampunk.synthasite.com).

20-22 Sep • **Festival of Fantastic Films**, Manchester Conference Centre, Sackville St. £70 reg. Contact 95 Meadowgate Rd, Salford,

Manchester, M6 8EN. See [fantastic-films.com](http://fantastic-films.com).

20-21 Sep • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Apparently you need to register online at [www.oxonmoot.org](http://www.oxonmoot.org) to learn the actual cost of booking and accommodation.

21 Sep • **Andromeda One**, Custard Factory, Birmingham. Doors open 8:30am; 11am-11pm. £25 reg; group of five £100. Register from 7pm Friday (social evening) or at [terror-tree.co.uk/andromeda-one/](http://terror-tree.co.uk/andromeda-one/).

25 Sep • **BSFA Open Meeting**, Artillery Arms, 102 Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8ND (*note August venue change*, announced too late for A313). 5/6pm for 7pm. With Gareth L. Powell. Free; all welcome.

18-20 Oct • **Lakes International Comic Art Festival**, Kendal, Cumbria. Many guests. Free exhibitions; day events £7; evening (7pm and after) £9; Comics Clock Tower venue £3.50/day; weekend and day passes offer savings. See [www.comicartfestival.com](http://www.comicartfestival.com).

25-27 Oct • **Celluloid Screams** horror film festival, Sheffield. £60 (£50 concessions). Bookings 0114 275 7727 or [celluloidscreams.co.uk](http://celluloidscreams.co.uk).

26 Oct • **BristolCon**, Ramada Hotel, Bristol. £20 reg to 25 October; £25 at the door. Cheques to 18 High Leaze Road, Patchway, Bristol BS34 5AF. See [www.bristolcon.org](http://www.bristolcon.org).

31 Oct - 3 Nov • **World Fantasy Convention**, Hilton Brighton Metropole. A final block of £150 memberships became available in late August: see [www.wfc2013.org](http://www.wfc2013.org). No at-door or day registrations.

8-10 Aug 2014 • **Nine Worlds Geekfest** (multimedia), ?Radisson and Renaissance Hotels, Heathrow. 'Super-early rate' £70 reg; £35 child. Advance booking online only at [ninemeworlds.co.uk](http://ninemeworlds.co.uk).

5-6 Sep 2014 • **A Fantastic Legacy**: Diana Wynne Jones memorial conference, Newcastle University. More information and call-for-papers link (deadline 28 March 2014) at <http://conferences.ncl.ac.uk/dwj/>.

19-23 Aug 2015 • **Sasquan** (Worldcon), Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, WA, USA. GoH Brad Foster, David Gerrold, Vonda McIntyre, Tom Smith and Leslie Turek. See <http://sasquan.org/>.

**Rumblings.** *Dublin in 2019*: see more at <http://dublin2019.com/>.

### Infinitely Improbable

**As Others See Doctor Who.** Under the headline 'What have football and Dr Who got in common? Crass hunger for a spectacle', sports columnist Chris McGrath deplored the BBC1 show revealing that the next Doctor would be played by an actor: 'It is bad enough that a new Dr Who must be introduced by the sort of puerile live show associated with reality TV evictions; worse, that such shrill self-aggrandisement should be complemented by a constant reel, across the screen, of inanities vouchsafed by viewers on Twitter.' (*Independent*, 10 August) The *New York Times* helpfully explained: 'For those readers who did not get beaten up in high school, "Doctor Who" is a beloved British sci-fi series about a character called the Doctor ...' (7 August) [JB]

**Awards.** *Children's Book Council of Australia Book of the Year*: Margo Lanagan, *Sea Hearts* aka *The Brides of Rollrock Island*. [L] • *Elgin* (new sf poetry award, named for Suzette Haden Elgin): CHAPBOOK F.J. Bergman, *Out of the Black Forest*. BOOK Mary Turzillo, *Lovers & Killers*. • *Encore* (for second novels): Ned Beauman, *The Teleportation Accident*. • *First Fandom Hall of Fame* inductees include the great and good Earl Kemp; other names awaited. • *Sidewise* (alternate history): SHORT Rick Wilber, 'Something Real' (*Asimov's* 4/12); LONG C.J. Sansom, *Dominion*.

**SFWA** announced on 14 August that an unspecified member had been expelled from the organization for unspecified reasons. 'We will continue to omit the expelled individual's name and the details of his behavior on advice of counsel.' SFWA-watchers assumed this must be Theodore 'Vox Day' Beale—see A312 on calls for his expulsion—who was quick to wallow in infamy by confirming this on his website.

**R.I.P.** David C Anderson, UK assistant director on *Dr No* and two more early Bond films, died on 4 August aged 72. Further genre credits include *Flash Gordon* (1980) and the tv *Tales From The Crypt* (1996) and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1997). [MPJ] • *Michael Ansara* (1922-2013), Syrian-born US actor whose genre roles include Kang the villainous Klingon in *Star Trek* (also *ST:DS9* and *ST:Voyager*) and the

voice of Mr Freeze in *Batman* animations, died on 31 July aged 91. [GD] ● **Karen Black** (1939-2013), US actress best known for *Easy Rider* and *Five Easy Pieces*, died on 8 August aged 74. Genre credits ran from *The Invaders* (tv 1967) to recent horror films *Soulkeeper* (2001), *House of 1000 Corpses* (2003) and *Nightmare Hostel* (2005). [SG] ● **Pamela Boal** (1935-2013), UK fan, con-goer, writer (attending early UK Milford workshops) and poet, whose letters appeared in many fanzines over the decades, died on 18 August; she was 78. [MR] David Boal writes: 'As my mother's illness became worse she was saddened by the number of people she had not contacted. I reassured her that you would all understand and on her behalf I apologise if this has come as a shock.' ● **John Boyd** (Boyd Bradfield Upchurch, 1919-2013), US author whose well-regarded sf debut was *The Last Starship from Earth* (1968) and who published a dozen more novels to 1978, died on 8 June. He was 93. ● **Late notice: Sol Dember** (1922-2011), US scientific illustrator whose sf work appeared in *Galaxy*, *If* and *Worlds of Tomorrow* from the late 1950s through the 1960s, died on 23 July 2011 aged 89. [JF via AIP] ● **David Fairbrother-Roe** RA, UK artist whose genre work included four striking dragon covers for British editions of Anne McCaffrey's *Pern* series, died on 21 July. He also painted covers for books by John Barth and C.J. Cherryh. ● **Seamus Heaney** (1939-2013), Irish poet and 1995 Nobel Prize winner whose many achievements included a fine new translation of *Beowulf*, died on 30 August aged 74. ● **Elmore Leonard** (1925-2013), US author of Westerns and bestselling crime novels who was honoured as Mystery Writers of America Grand Master in 1992, died on 20 August aged 87. Rare ventures into the fantastic included *Touch* (1987) and *A Coyote's in the House* (2004). [L] ● **Dan McCarthy** (1934-2013), New Zealand fan, writer, artist, con-runner and APA stalwart, died on 7 August a few days after a major stroke; he was 78. James Dignan describes him as 'the elder statesman of New Zealand science fiction fandom.' ● **Stephenie McMillan** (1942-2013), Oscar-winning UK set decorator who worked on all eight Harry Potter films—also *Santa Claus: The Movie* (1985), *The Secret Garden* (1993) and *The Avengers* (1998)—died on 19 August aged 71. [MMW] ● **Douglas R. Mason** (1918-2013), UK sf author active from 1964 to 1981 both under his own name and as John Rankine, died on 8 August; he was 94. [AS] As Rankine (his middle name) he was best known for the Dag Fletcher space operas—including his debut story in John Carnell's *New Writings in SF 1* (1964), and *Interstellar Two-Five* (1966)—and for several *Space: 1999* spinoffs. ● **Slawomir Mrozek** (1930-2013), Polish absurdist playwright and author whose short satires and fantasies were translated as *The Elephant* (1962) and *The Ugupu Bird* (1968), died on 15 August; he was 83. [JC] ● **Anne C. Petty** (1945-2013), US Tolkien scholar and novelist whose books include *One Ring to Bind Them All: Tolkien's Mythology* (1979) and the Faustian fantasy *The Cornerstone* (2013), died on 21 July. [SFS/PDF] ● **Ted Post** (1918-2013), US director whose genre credits include four *Twilight Zone* segments (1960-1964), *Beneath the Planet of the Apes* (1970) and *Ark II* (1976-1979), died on 29 August aged 95. [MPJ] ● **J.C. Suares** (1942-2013), Egyptian-born US illustrator and graphic designer whose works included *Rocketship: An Incredible Voyage Through Science Fiction and Science Fact* (1977) with Robert Malone, died on 30 July aged 71. [AIP] ● **Gilbert Taylor** (1914-2013), UK cinematographer who worked on *Dr Strangelove* (1964), *The Avengers* (tv 1966-1969), *The Omen* (1976), *Star Wars* (1977) and *Flash Gordon* (1980), died on 23 August. He was 99. [AW]

**The Weakest Link.** Testing supernatural awareness. *John Moody*: 'What plant is said to deter vampires?' *Contestant (after a long pause)*: 'Well, I was gonna say garlic but that's not a plant, is it?' *John Moody*: 'You've just won ten pounds!' (*Cash Cab* on Quest TV) [PE]

**Forbes Report.** 2012-2013 guesses at top-earning authors' income begin with E.L. James's fifty shades of \$95 million. The rest: James Patterson \$91m, Suzanne Collins \$55m, Bill O'Reilly \$28m, Danielle Steel \$26m, Jeff Kinney \$24m, Janet Evanovich \$24m, Nora Roberts \$23m, Dan Brown \$22m, Stephen King \$20m, Dean Koontz \$20m, John Grisham \$18m, David Baldacci \$15m, Rick Riordan \$14m, J.K. Rowling \$13m, George R.R. Martin \$12m. [AIP] For Terry Pratchett's sceptical views about this kind of list, see *Ansible* 75 (October 1993).

**Award Shortlists.** *David Gemmell* (heroic fantasy): NOVEL Joe Abercrombie, *The Red Country*; Jay Kristoff, *Stormdancer*; Mark Lawrence, *King of Thorns*; Helen Lowe, *The Gathering of the Lost*; Brent Weeks, *The Blinding Knife*. FIRST NOVEL Saladin Ahmed, *Throne of the Crescent Moon*; Miles Cameron, *The Red Knight*; John Gwynne, *Malice*; Aidan Harte, *Irenicon*; Jay Kristoff, *Stormdancer*. COVER ART Didier Graffet and Dave Senior for *The Red Country* above; Dominic Harman for *Legion of Shadow* by Michael J. Ward; Clint Langley for *Besieged* by

Rowenna Cory Daniells; Silas Manhood for *The Blinding Knife* above; Colin Thomas, for *Stormdancer* above; Stephen Youll for *The Black Mausoleum* by Stephen Deas. Presentation at WFC. ● **World Fantasy Award**, novels: N.K. Jemisin, *The Killing Moon*; Graham Joyce, *Some Kind of Fairy Tale*; Caitlín R. Kiernan, *The Drowning Girl*; Anna Tambour, *Crandolin*; G. Willow Wilson, *Alif the Unseen*. Presentation at WFC. Further categories online at [www.worldfantasy.org/awards/](http://www.worldfantasy.org/awards/).

**As Others See Us II.** A *Financial Times* piece on Amazon's Jeff Bezos offers two trivia nuggets, one to do with packets of vitamins in his socks. 'The only other personal detail about the opaque Mr Bezos is that he likes *Star Trek*—which isn't particularly interesting. A geek who doesn't like *Star Trek*—now, that would be a story.' (12 August) [MMW]

**Outraged Letters.** *Claire M Jordan*: 'Did you see the story about the 1990s-vintage replacement gargoyles on Paisley Cathedral, which parishioners have only just noticed include the alien from *Alien* and Puff the Magic Dragon?' ● **Dennis McCunney** on the new, Ed Kramer-free Dragon Con, Inc.: 'Alas, not quite a done deal. The other founders all moved their interests in the con to the new corporate vehicle. They've made Kramer an offer for his shares in the former entity, but he has not yet accepted it. (I believe he's quibbling about the price.) / Kramer had already sold some of his Dragon Con holdings to pay legal bills, reducing his stake from 50% to 33%. It's quite likely he'll have to dispose of the rest to pay his ongoing legal expenses.' ● **Norm Sherman** tweets from the Hugos: 'George Martin says we're living in the Golden Age of Science Fiction & Fantasy. So I guess that means he's going to kill it.'

**We Are Everywhere.** Iain Banks was remembered at the Edinburgh International Book Festival with *Guardian*-sponsored deckchairs quoting *Consider Phlebas* in huge print: 'Empathize with stupidity and you're halfway to thinking like an idiot.' [JG] A *Guardian* piece on games in his novels, titled 'Iain Banks: A Player of Games' (22 August), conspicuously fails to discuss the game-saturated *The Player of Games* or indeed anything at all by Iain M. Banks; could this be another case of Atwood's Syndrome, morbid fear of spaceships on the cover?

**Magazine Scene.** *Omni Reboot* is, er, an online reboot of *Omni*. At [omnireboot.com](http://omnireboot.com) it's also described as 'a rag for the gonzo seeker.'

**As Others See Some of Us.** Film review of *The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones*: 'Cassandra Clare, author of the bestselling books on which this movie is based, began as a writer of fan fiction inspired by the Harry Potter books, and it shows. / The characterisation and plot are painfully unimaginative.' (Chris Tookey, *Daily Mail*, 23 August) Whether the scorn is for HP or fan fiction in general is unclear. [CMJ]

**The Dead Past.** *50 Years Ago* at the London First-Thursday pub meeting: 'ARTHUR C. CLARKE was in the Globe 5th September, en route to the States where he will receive on 16th October the 1963 Stuart Ballantine Medal of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia for "the early concept of the Communication satellite." Arthur had with him lumps of coral coated bullion salvaged from the coasts of Ceylon and a bag of silver coins from the same source.' (*Skyrack* 58, October 1963)

**Thog's Masterclass.** *Chef's Special*. 'Gaiety collapsed behind them like a startled soufflé.' (Dave Duncan, *The Hunter's Haunt*, 1995) [PM] ● **Neat Tricks Dept.** 'He put Chris up against the wall more than once, raised his closed fist, and walked away before punching him.' 'Ben threw his ass out on Milton, got his own rebound, and passed it to Ali.' (George Pelecanos, *The Way Home*, 2009) [PB] ● **Dept of Synchronized Bobbing.** 'Guidry nodded, his adam's apple bobbing along with his head.' (Erica Spindler, *Justice for Sara*, 2013) [PB] ● **Averted Eyeballs in the Sky.** 'Other visitors were clearly eavesdropping, since they flicked averted eyes at our chairs with the swift, voracious motion of a lizard's tongue.' (Lionel Shriver, *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, 2003) [RC] ● **Literally Literal Dept.** 'The thought of Niamh made his heart feel heavy in his chest, literally, not metaphorically.' (Kate Atkinson, *Case Histories*, 2005) [PB] ● **True Romance.** 'The arrangement of her drawers was far too sophisticated for me.' 'Fermin gazed at that miracle of nature and let himself be embraced by a heart almost as old as his own.' (both Carlos Ruiz Zafon trans Lucia Graves, *The Prisoner of Heaven*, 2011) [PB] ● **Wild Hair Dept.** 'The tip of his long ponytail peeked out from beneath his cloak like a second penis.' (John Lawson, *The Loathly Lady*, 2013; this made Thog's eyes bulge like third and fourth testicles) [RF]

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